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# ClickOnDetroit.com

## Breaking News: Verdict Reached In Kukla Trial

POSTED: 10:07 am EDT September 12, 2007

UPDATED: 10:38 am EDT September 12, 2007

**MACOMB COUNTY, Mich.** -- A verdict has been reached in the Jennifer Kukla trial.

Kukla, 30, was found guilty but insane on first-degree murder.

Kukla was convicted of killing her two children, Ashley, 5, and Alexandra, 8, were fatally stabbed inside a mobile home off M-59 in Macomb Township.

Macomb County Sheriff Mark Hackel said the situation was very graphic, very sad and the officers were left shaken.

The scene was "very difficult," Hackel said. "Even the officers were having a hard time with that one. ... That was one that left you with not much sleep last night, that's for sure."

Police were notified on Feb. 4 by the 30-year-old woman's sister after she visited the home.

"When she approached the door, the door was open already," Hackel said. "She called her sister's name, she came out to the door area and she explained that she had harmed the kids."

Hackel said the sister never entered the dwelling. She told police she had visited her sister Saturday night to help her clean the house out of concern for her sister's children, the sheriff said. She reported leaving around 11 p.m.

Three of the family's dogs and even a pet mouse were also stabbed repeatedly.

### Previous Stories:

- February 15, 2007: [Mom Accused Of Killing Kids To Undergo Forensic Evaluation](#)
- February 5, 2007: [Mother Charged In Slaying Of 2 Daughters](#)

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**Jury weighs insanity plea in 2 girls' deaths**

Macomb prosecutor says mom was ill but chose to kill daughters

September 12, 2007

BY CHRISTINA HALL

FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER

The prosecution said Jennifer Kukla chose to kill her two young daughters. Her defense attorney said she didn't intend to kill them, but to protect them from being tortured, raped and eaten by evil forces.

Both sides tried to sway the jury during closing arguments Tuesday in Kukla's first-degree murder trial in Macomb County Circuit Court, but jurors didn't reach a verdict and are to continue deliberations today.

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The 30-year-old Macomb Township mother is accused of fatally stabbing her daughters Alexandra, 8, and Ashley, 5, in her mobile home Feb. 4. Kukla has pleaded not guilty by reason of insanity.

On Tuesday, jurors heard about 30 minutes of testimony from the last defense witness, a psychologist from Farmington Hills who said Kukla was legally insane when she killed her daughters.

In closing arguments that followed, Assistant Macomb County Prosecutor Bill Cataldo used props, such as a poster with the definition of mental illness and duct tape he stripped along the floor to show how Kukla never crossed the line into insanity.

"She made a choice. That's knowing the difference between right and wrong," Cataldo said. "She specifically intended to kill her kids."

Steve Freers, Kukla's attorney, said she wanted to save her children.

"Insanity can be temporary, and in this case it was," he told the jury.

Both sides agree Kukla was mentally ill. Cataldo asked jurors to find her mentally ill but guilty of first-degree murder.

They also can consider second-degree murder. Freers asked jurors to find her not guilty by reason of insanity.

If that's the verdict, Kukla would be committed for up to 60 days for evaluation in the state's Center for Forensic Psychiatry, Freers said.

He said she could be released, but most likely would be hospitalized "for a long period of time."

If convicted of first-degree murder, Kukla would receive life in prison without parole.

She could receive up to life in prison if convicted of second-degree murder, Prosecutor Eric Smith said.

Contact **CHRISTINA HALL** at 586-469-4683 or [chall@freepress.com](mailto:chall@freepress.com).

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## Jury weighs if mom insane

### Prosecution: Stabbing of daughters premeditated

By Jameson Cook  
Macomb Daily Staff Writer

Was Jennifer Kukla temporarily insane and following the instructions of "voices" when she brutally stabbed to death her two young daughters?

Or was she merely suffering from mental illness, unable to deal with the stresses of life but still legally responsible for her horrific actions?

Those questions are being deliberated by a Macomb County Circuit Court jury, which Tuesday afternoon began mulling the fate of Kukla, 30, who killed Alexandra, 8, and Ashley, 5, the morning of Feb. 4, hours after telling other people she was hearing demonic voices.

"Voices or choices, that's what you're really here to decide," assistant Macomb prosecutor William Cataldo told the jury in closing arguments. "This whole case is about choices. She chose to kill those children."

Cataldo, chief of homicides for the Macomb County Prosecutor's Office, asked the jury to find her guilty but mentally ill of first-degree, premeditated murder in which she would spend the rest of her life in prison without a chance for parole.

Kukla's attorney, Steven Freers, tried to convince the jury to find his client insane in which she likely would receive years of treatment in a psychiatric center.

Freers said the crux of the case surrounds intent -- his client believed she was helping her children when she stabbed them with a butcher knife multiple times in their necks, saving them from threats made by the voices in her head.

"Her intent was not to kill her children, her intent was to protect them," Freers said. "In her own mind she did not kill them. She thought they would be tortured, raped and they would be eaten."

The jury listened Tuesday to the testimony of the final witness, Lyle Danuloff, the last of three psychologists who unanimously agreed that Kukla was experiencing a brief psychotic episode when she stabbed the children.

"At that time, she was in fact unable to know the wrongfulness of her behavior and unable to conform her behavior to the requirements of the law," Danuloff testified.

But Cataldo contended that Kukla not only chose to kill her "own flesh and blood," she chose to save herself, despite the voices twice telling her to kill herself.

"If you don't do it because it's less painful, that's a conscious decision," Cataldo said. "It wasn't so hard to kill those two children."

Kukla did suffer self-inflicted cuts to her wrist, causing bleeding and requiring medical attention.

Cataldo agreed that Kukla suffered from mental illness but argued that her condition did not rise to insanity.

Two of the three psychologists who testified -- Charles Clark and George Watson -- said Kukla's 12-hour incident of insanity is extremely rare. Of his evaluations of more than 1,100 defendants, Watson said only 64 have resulted in courtroom insanity declaration. And of that 5.8 percent, he and Clark agreed that fewer than 10 percent of those declared insane suffered psychosis for only a few hours.

Kukla told authorities that she began suffering delusions and hallucinations during the early nighttime hours of Saturday, Feb. 3, when her sister, Lauren Russell, and two of her friends came to clean her home in Hometown Macomb park, north of Hall Road, in Macomb Township. Kukla said she was worried that Children's Protective Services was going to visit her home soon and feared her children would be taken away from her.

Because of financial problems, the single mother had trouble at times keeping up with utility bills, as child support from the two fathers lacked. In the day or two before the killings, the pipes at her home froze, and the unit had no water at the time of the slayings. The furnace had broken down, and her ex-boyfriend fixed it Feb. 3.

Kukla worked as an assistant manager at the McDonald's restaurant at 23 Mile and Romeo Plank roads.

Several witnesses testified that despite her problems, Kukla was a good mother who kept good care of the girls. Kukla's neighbor, Rhonda Santos, described the children as "beautiful" and well-behaved.

Kukla told people the night of Feb. 3 that she had been hypnotized in the past and forced by people in a gang or biker gang to kill people. She told her sister she suspected she had not given birth to her daughters but rather kidnapped them.

Psychologists Clark and Watson testified that Kukla's alcohol abuse and family history of mental illness didn't cause but may have contributed to her actions.

Kukla admitted she drank about a 12-pack of beer a day. On that night, testimony varied on her beer consumption.

Kukla's mother, who died about a year before the slayings, had a history of mental problems and had been hospitalized for mental illness for about a month in recent years. When she was a girl, Kukla's mother had chased her around their yard with a butcher's knife, according to testimony.

During the night of Feb. 3 and 4, Kukla and the two children slept on a mattress on the floor in the girl's bedroom. Kukla said she slept only a couple of hours and held the knife because she feared for her children.

On the morning of the slayings, Kukla dressed her children for school shortly after 7:30 a.m. even though it was a Sunday and walked down the street a short distance before returning. She said she wanted to call her father but didn't have a phone.

She killed the children around 8 a.m. and sat in the mobile home until Russell arrived shortly after 6 p.m.

Kukla told psychologists she didn't remember hearing voices during the killings.

After the killings, Kukla stabbed to death an adult dog and two puppies in the home. She killed a pet mouse in an aquarium by breaking its neck.

In arguing against insanity, Cataldo pointed out that Kukla showed sanity because she realized the impact of her actions. She told her sister and the first police officer on the scene, sheriff's Sgt. Lori Misch, that she was "going to hell" for her actions and told Misch, "There is a special place in hell for people like me."

Cataldo during the trial never said Kukla was a liar or faking insanity, but he alluded to it. He pointed out that the voices allegedly heard by Kukla are all because of "self-reporting."

Psychologist Clark, however, countered that he reviewed the police and psychological reports and was convinced that Kukla told the truth. He said there were "remarkable consistencies" and "no essential change in any respect" in her many statements.

Clark testified that Kukla's urge to kill was as strong as the urge for someone to fight back against being assaulted.

Psychologist Danuloff said he was surprised that Clark testified for the defense because Clark has a reputation as supporting the prosecution's side in cases. Clark is the former director of the Center for Forensic Psychiatry in Ypsilanti.

Following closing arguments, county Prosecutor Eric Smith called the killings "probably the most horrific crimes we've had in our county."

He said he dismissed Kukla's insanity plea.

"We're not going to say, 'Here's a free pass. Go get treatment,'" he said. "They (Alexandra and Ashley) are never going to have a Christmas. They never got birthdays. And they were killed by the person who is most supposed to protect them."

The jury is expected to continue deliberating this morning.

To achieve an insanity verdict, Freers had to only prove by "a preponderance of the evidence" that Kukla was insane, not beyond reasonable doubt. Meanwhile, the prosecution must prove its case beyond reasonable doubt.

If jurors find Kukla insane, she will be sent to the state Center, which will determine whether she would be committed. She could be freed after 60 days, but Freers said that is extremely unlikely and she probably would be held at the Center for years.

If she is found guilty but mentally ill, she will spend the rest of her life in prison but receive extra psychological treatment.

The jury could also come to a verdict of guilty but mentally ill of second-degree murder, which carries a penalty of any number of years up to life.

Freers argued against the second-degree murder option, but Judge Edward Servitto allowed it in jury instructions.

The jury could return a not guilty verdict, but both lawyers said that decision would be inappropriate.

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**Exam set for woman charged in killing**

September 12, 2007

A Livonia woman, charged with first-degree murder after her newborn son was found dead of strangulation in a trash bin at an apartment complex last month, was ordered Tuesday to undergo a competency exam.

Rebecca K. Horeczy, 28, also is charged with felony murder, second-degree murder and first-degree child abuse. If she is convicted, the first-degree and felony murder charges both carry mandatory sentences of life in prison.

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She is to be back in court Oct. 23.

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Article published Sep 12, 2007  
Police examine B.C. child's death  
**Trace Christenson**  
*The Enquirer*

An investigation has begun in the death of a 19-month-old Battle Creek girl.

Battle Creek police are calling Monday's death of Ania Terry suspicious, but are releasing few details.

The death is the third of a small child in Calhoun County since July.

Cmdr. James Saylor of the Battle Creek Police Department said the child's parents, who he did not identify, called 911 about 11:25 a.m. Monday to report the little girl was having a medical problem.

Before an ambulance reached the home at 92 Groveland St., the parents found someone to drive them to Battle Creek Health System.

Doctors tried unsuccessfully to revive the child, Saylor said.

An autopsy was conducted Tuesday at Sparrow Hospital in Lansing, but Saylor declined to discuss the results as the investigation continues.

Funeral arrangements are pending for the child.

In other recent cases:

- Chadwick Damon, 20, of Marshall is charged with the July 17 death of Mackenzie VandenHeede, the 4-year-old daughter of his girlfriend. A preliminary examination is delayed while Damon undergoes a psychiatric evaluation.
- Adam Markos, 24, of Battle Creek is awaiting a preliminary examination, charged with murder in the Aug. 6 death of Dominic Munoz, 4, the son of his girlfriend.
- A child has been released from Bronson Methodist Hospital in Kalamazoo after Calhoun County Sheriff's Department investigators said he was shaken. Emmanuel Moyer, who turned 8 weeks old on Monday, was allegedly injured on July 1 by his father, Karl Moyer. Moyer, 22, is charged with first-degree child abuse and his preliminary examination is scheduled for Monday.

The child was released from the hospital last week, but doctors are still evaluating his condition and injuries, investigators said Tuesday.

*Trace Christenson can be reached at 966-0685 or [tchrist@battlecr.gannett.com](mailto:tchrist@battlecr.gannett.com).*

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Article published Sep 11, 2007

B.C. police call death of 19-month-old girl "suspicious"

The Enquirer

A 19-month-old Battle Creek girl is dead and police said today the circumstances of the death are suspicious.

Ania Terry died Monday at Battle Creek Health System, according to Cmdr. James Saylor of the Battle Creek Police Department.

Saylor said an autopsy was conducted today but he would not discuss the results. He said detectives are continuing their investigation.

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**Missing Lincoln Park boy believed to be with mom**

September 12, 2007

By ZLATI MEYER

FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER

Lincoln Park police have issued an Amber Alert for a 5-year-old boy they say was taken by his noncustodial biological mother at 7 p.m. Tuesday.

Marquise Morris Byrd is 3 feet tall and 45 pounds with brown eyes and hair and a birthmark on his forehead. He was last seen wearing blue jeans with the words "All Star" written in yellow on a pant leg, a red long-sleeved pullover shirt and Shrek sandals.

**Advertisement**

Scherrie Caprice Byrd left with Marquise on foot from Cleveland Street, according to police. No car was seen and no vehicle is registered in her name.

When last spotted, Byrd – who's 5'8" and 185 pounds -- had on blue jean shorts, a blue jean button-up shirt and a brown scarf wrapped around her brown hair. Her eyes are brown, too.

Investigators said the 30-year-old woman had been heard saying, "Police will never find me. You will never get him back."

Anyone with information is asked to call the police at 313-381-1800 or 313-381-8378.

**Find this article at:**

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Detroit Free Press

Macomb County news briefs

*September 12, 2007*

## **CLINTON TOWNSHIP: Man charged in Internet sex sting**

A Flint man was being held in the Macomb County jail on Tuesday after authorities said he arranged in an online chat room to meet someone he thought was a 15-year-old boy for sex. But the person was an undercover officer.

Brandon A. Rosser-York, 19, is charged with three counts each of child sexually abusive activity and using a computer in the commission of a crime. He was being held on \$50,000 cash bond after arraignment in 41B District Court in Clinton Township, according to the Macomb County Sheriff's Office.

Sheriff Mark Hackel said the officer, who is with the Macomb Area Computer Enforcement team, portrayed the teenage boy on the Internet as Rosser-York initiated a chat.

Hackel said Rosser-York wanted to meet the boy at a location in Macomb County, but when he arrived Monday, he was arrested.

## **Ludington Daily News**

Posted: 9-11-2007

# **Eat chili for a good cause**

MELISSA MCGUIRE - DAILY NEWS STAFF WRITER

Rev up your engines and get your taste buds ready. Saturday evening, Sept. 15 is Ludington Bike Night and the third annual André Bosse's Pot-Luck Chili Cookoff in downtown Ludington. The chili cookoff runs from 5 to 7 p.m. at the corner of James and Loomis streets. Area businesses and groups will enter chili in the contest and have fun while raising money to support child advocacy and prevention programs offered at the André Bosse Centers.

For a \$5 donation attendees can taste the entered chili and enjoy a bowl of our "house" chili.

In previous years the event was held at the Elks in November.

"The Elks was a great venue for the event but the fact is we grew out of it," stated Megan Maltbie, development director for the André Bosse Centers. She added that the event was close to exceeding the Elks capacity and the chefs felt that they needed additional space to promote their chili. This new outdoor venue will allow the event to continue to grow, add additional chefs and will sure to be a great addition to Ludington Bike Night. The André Bosse Centers hope that within a few years this event will evolve into a sanctioned chili festival with a professional and local division.

Attendees will see a lot of additions to this year's event besides the venue. The biggest being a 65-gallon pot of house chili donated by Big Boy Restaurant of Ludington.

"Big Boy's donation will ensure that we have enough chili for 800-plus people" Maltbie added. In addition to the Golden Ladle Traveling

Trophy given to the chili that raises the most votes or money in their collection bucket, the Bosse Center will add two new awards Best in Show and Judges Choice.

Area groups and agencies that are challenging West Michigan Community Mental Health for the coveted Golden Ladle are Ludington Police Department, City of Scottville, Ludington Daily News, Catholic Social Services, Department of Human Services, Michigan State Police, Ludington Fire Department, Memorial Medical Center, Mason County Prosecutor's Office, Mason County Sheriff's Office, WMOM, Plaza Café, and Butts & Bones.

“This is a fun way that our office, employees and the entire community can come out and support the services that André Bosse Centers provide to fight child abuse and to help children who are victims.” said Rich VandenHeuvel, executive director of Community Mental Health.

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Date published: 9-11-2007

2002 Ludington Daily News.



## Child care provider accepts license revocation

*By James Martinez, Staff Writer*

OTSEGO COUNTY — A child day care group home previously allowed to care for seven to 12 children no longer has its license following a compliance conference with the Dept. of Human Services (DHS).

According to DHS spokesperson Maureen Sorbet, the home licensee, Christine Inman of Gaylord, accepted the license revocation on Aug. 31 during a compliance conference with the state while agreeing not to reapply for a child care license for at least two years. Under that agreement, Inman has no more appellate options, said Sorbet.

When contacted Inman, chose to speak on her own behalf, and said she turned in her license to the state and agreed not to reapply for the specified time period. She was unsure whether she would reapply for a license after that time period and declined comment on the allegations which led the state to investigate her license.

"We're just turning (the license) in," said Inman, who also would not comment when asked if any children were still in her care.

With revocation accepted, Sorbet said DHS action regarding Inman's revoked license is complete, unless Inman were to attempt to reapply, and that the license allowing Inman to care for the seven to 12 children in the home was no longer valid as of Aug. 31.

As previously posted at the DHS Web site, Inman's license was effective from June 19, 2006 and would have been valid until June 18, 2008 before the state's action. The license no longer appears on the Web site.

According to the June 6, 2007 special investigation, Inman received her license originally on Nov. 1, 2001.

The August agreement follows two special DHS investigation reports from April 25 and June 6 which both included recommendations by a state licensing consultant to revoke Inman's license due to various violations of state law regulating childcare.

The Herald Times acquired the April 25 report through a July 6, Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request to DHS for records on Inman's license since April 1, 2007; and for a December 2006 special investigation report. The June 6 report also was acquired in that request, but was originally acquired via the DHS Web site, following the FOIA request.

DHS declined to release the December report citing state law.

Inman's license, however, remained valid throughout the investigation process and Inman continued to care for children, according to her husband, Mike, who spoke to the Herald Times on her behalf in the past.

The investigations concluded that there were a number of violations of law governing such a home following allegations that Inman was intoxicated during daycare hours, a nude woman was present when a parent arrived with a child, children were left unattended in a vehicle and other violations involving caregiving responsibilities and sleeping equipment.

As previously reported, Mike Inman adamantly defended his wife and the home raising questions about the accuracy of the state's report, as well as denying his wife ever admitted to being intoxicated. He conceded a nude woman was present, but reiterated that no children were in danger during the incident. He explained the incident by saying the Inmans offered to let the woman stay at the home to "keep a drunk driver off the road."

Contact James Martinez at 748-4522 or [james@gaylordheraldtimes.com](mailto:james@gaylordheraldtimes.com)



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Published September 9, 2007

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## Janell Thelen named to lead Children's Trust Fund

LANSING — The Children's Trust Fund of Michigan (CTF) is pleased to announce the appointment of Janell M. Thelen of Fowler as its new program director.

In announcing her appointment, CTF's Executive Director Rich Bearup said that Thelen will begin her new duties September 10th.

Thelen is a graduate of Michigan State University, earned an MBA, and is a certified public accountant. She has been in state public service since 1998 and was previously associated with the accounting firms of Abraham & Gaffney (St. Johns) and Stuart, Heins and Wise (Lansing).

In her new position, she will be responsible for the Trust Fund's child abuse and neglect prevention programs funded and administered by the CTF under a statute sponsored in 1982 by then State Representative (now United States Senator) Debbie Stabenow.

Now in its 25th year, CTF has raised and granted more than \$60 million for child abuse prevention programs in all of the state's 83 counties. CTF currently funds 72 local child abuse prevention councils and 81 additional community-based non-profit programs in every region of the state.

The underlying endowment for the Trust Fund is now in excess of \$22 million.

"The Children's Trust Fund is fortunate to have Janell Thelen join and help lead our team," Bearup said. "She brings excellent experience, outstanding skills and an impressive record of accomplishment to us."

Thelen and her husband reside in Fowler with their four children.

— *From Children's Trust Fund of Michigan*

The Detroit News

Wednesday, September 12, 2007

## Stabenow gives charity Hsu cash

Associated Press

**WASHINGTON** -- Sen. Debbie Stabenow, D-Mich., donated to charity \$4,200 in political contributions from Democratic fundraiser Norman Hsu, who is under federal investigation for allegedly violating election laws.

Brent Colburn, a Stabenow spokesman, said Tuesday that the senator gave the money late last week to the Children's Trust Fund of Michigan, a nonprofit organization that funds child abuse prevention programs.

The FBI is investigating whether Hsu paid so-called straw donors to send campaign contributions to several candidates. Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton's presidential campaign said Monday it will return \$850,000 in donations raised by Hsu.

Hsu gave Stabenow's campaign the maximum donation of \$4,200 on March 31, 2005, records show. Stabenow defeated Oakland County Sheriff Mike Bouchard last year to win a second term in the U.S. Senate.

Colburn said the campaign typically returns donations or gives them to charity "whenever it comes out that a donor was involved in this type of illegal activity."

Hsu has donated \$260,000 to Democratic Party groups and federal candidates since 2004, and raised hundreds of thousands of additional dollars. He was considered a top party fundraiser until recent reports surfaced that he was wanted on a warrant in California in connection with a 1991 grand theft charge.



Detroit News Opinion

September 12, 2007

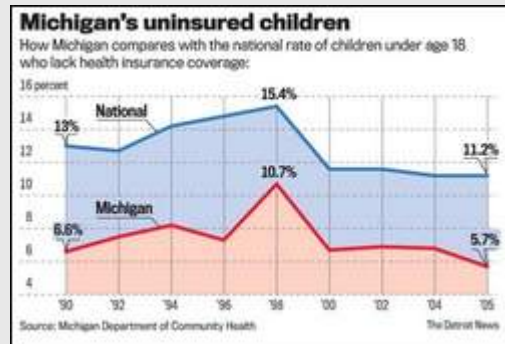
# Save health coverage for kids

## Renewing, expanding federal program maintains quality of life for children

Janet Olszewski



Olszewski



In the 21st century, life moves at a very rapid pace. Sometimes, it is easy to lose sight of issues that are important to the most vulnerable among us. Chief among those concerns is maintaining a high quality of living for our children, and we must never overlook the absolute necessity for accessible, dependable and high-quality health care for our most precious resource.

In Michigan, we have worked hard to maintain health care programs and services for thousands of kids who depend on our assistance. Despite our best efforts, for many children the future isn't all that bright. Today, here in the United States, millions of children are uninsured and thousands of them live right here in Michigan.

### **Give kids a healthy start**

Luckily, leaders in our great state understand that a key objective associated with ensuring that children have a healthy start in life is to assure they have health care coverage.

Despite dealing with more than \$4 billion in budget deficits, Gov. Jennifer Granholm has kept Michigan's Medicaid program intact. By preserving Medicaid spending and investing those resources and other funds wisely, Michigan has continued to provide a full range of health care benefits to more than 1.6 Michigan residents, 950,000 of whom are children.

More than 40,000 additional children are covered through MICHild, or Michigan's State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) -- a key health care access point that must be preserved.

### **State's low uninsured rate**

Thanks to our state's robust SCHIP program, Michigan has one of the lowest rates of uninsured children in the country. A study released by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation within the past month shows that our rate is below 6 percent -- as opposed to the national average of 11 percent.

However, this program is in jeopardy. As it stands, SCHIP -- and the funding for those children who rely on the program every month for health coverage -- is set to expire on Sept. 30.

Congress and the Bush administration must reauthorize SCHIP before the end of September. Federal SCHIP reauthorization is critically important for our future -- and it has widespread support.

Both of our senators -- Debbie Stabenow and Carl Levin -- and Congressman John Dingell have been instrumental in brokering congressional agreement in the Capitol for this program.

### **MICHild succeeds**

The MICHild program has been successful in Michigan because it allows for significant flexibility in both the program's design and implementation. It is vitally important that Congress and the Bush administration allow us to maintain this flexibility so we can achieve maximum enrollment in this successful program.

When Gov. Granholm hosted the National Governors Association meeting in Traverse City last month, Michigan joined with 42 other governors -- Democrats and Republicans alike -- and sent a letter to Washington urging quick action at the federal level. Shortly after that, the U.S. House and Senate both passed bills to reauthorize this critical program.

I want to be clear -- this is not a Republican issue or a Democratic issue. It is an American issue that affects every one of us in one way or another.

As someone who has been a state health care administrator for more than 20 years, I have seen firsthand the difference between a child with insurance and one without.

Helping children stay well -- beginning at an early age -- helps them be ready to learn at school, prevents them from developing serious chronic diseases later in life, improves health outcomes and reduces overall health care costs. The benefits are clear and far outweigh the price.

No investment is more important than giving a child a healthy start, so let's start today. We must encourage Congress and President Bush to reauthorize SCHIP now. Our children deserve nothing less.

Janet Olszewski is the director of the Michigan Department of Community Health. E-mail comments to [letters@detnews.com](mailto:letters@detnews.com).

# Local Nursing Home May be Forced to Shut Down

WLNS TV 6 Lansing

Sep 11, 2007 04:30 PM EDT



A local nursing home may be forced to shut down. Safety violations have landed Tendercare Couth in trouble with the state and federal government. Tendercare South in Lansing is home for more than seventy ill and elderly patients. They're there because they need around the clock health care. The state says they're not getting the care they deserve.

TJ Bucholz, Michigan Dept. of Community Health: "We believe that the health and safety of the residents will be at risk."

State inspection reports show the nursing home has an unusually high number violations, 3 times the average. In May, state inspectors found 3 violations, including improper treatment of pressure sores and mishandling of medications. Three months later, inspectors found 8 more violations. 3

TJ Bucholz: "Issues with smoking and unrestricted areas, which as you know, in a nursing home can be very dangerous."

Those dangers have the federal government taking action. Last week, the Centers for Medicaid and Medicare notified Tendercare that it will not pay for patient care after September 29th.

TJ Bucholz: "CMS not electing not to make federal resources available to the nursing home, most often shuts it down."

But Tendercare tells 6 News it does not plan to close its doors. In a statement, President and Chief Executive Officer Tim Lukenda says, "we have not been given the opportunity to demonstrate the corrective action that has been taken." The state says the company has had plenty of time to comply, and now it's too late. If Tendercare decides to close the facility, the

state says it will step in and work to make sure every resident is relocated in a safe and timely manner.

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Article published Sep 12, 2007

Man pleads no contest in assault on girlfriend

**Trace Christenson**

*The Enquirer*

A Battle Creek man, charged with assaulting his girlfriend and setting her house on fire the day after Christmas, has entered a plea.

Steven Gilliard, 39, pleaded no contest to assault with intent to cause great bodily harm less than murder, home invasion and arson. He is charged as an habitual fourth offender.

Gilliard entered his plea Tuesday in Calhoun County Circuit Court in a plea agreement with prosecutors on the morning of his scheduled trial.

As part of the agreement, Prosecutor John Hallacy said charges of assault with intent to murder will be dropped.

Gilliard was arrested after Battle Creek police said he broke into the home of Rannette Dilling, his girlfriend of 10 years and mother of his three children, at 1036 W. Michigan Ave.

Dilling testified during a preliminary examination that Gilliard asked her to state her last words.

Investigators said Gilliard attacked Dilling with a knife and baseball bat, and after she and five children escaped from the house, he started two fires and had to be rescued by Battle Creek firefighters.

The fire destroyed the children's Christmas presents and killed the family dog.

Because of his prior convictions of vandalism and resisting police, Gilliard could be sentenced up to life in prison.

Judge Allen Garbrecht will sentence Gilliard Oct. 11.

*Trace Christenson can be reached at 966-0685 or [tchrist@battlecr.gannett.com](mailto:tchrist@battlecr.gannett.com).*

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# ClickOnDetroit.com

## Son Speaks Out About Mother's Slaying

### *Manhunt Continues For Husband Accused Of Woman's Death*

POSTED: 1:36 pm EDT September 7, 2007  
UPDATED: 7:39 am EDT September 12, 2007

**WATERFORD TOWNSHIP, Mich.** -- Waterford police are looking for a man accused of shooting and killing his wife, Laura Ann Stenberg .

Police responded to a report of shots fired at Stenberg's Waterford home.

She was transferred to a local hospital, where she died

Police said her son Jason Brindley, 28, told them he saw Stenberg holding the gun on his mother a short time before. He said he left and then he heard gunshots.

On Monday, Brindley told Local 4 this was not the first time she was abused. "He was a very abusive person. My mom just took it. She was in love with him and thought this was something couples could get through," said Brindley. "I want to see him in jail. Either way would be fine. I would rather see him in jail, caught and sit there and think about what he did for the rest of his life."

Around 11 p.m. Friday, police used two bomb robots to search a home on Mann Road near Clintonville on the border of Waterford and Independence Township after receiving a tip that the vehicle used by Stenberg was seen in the area.

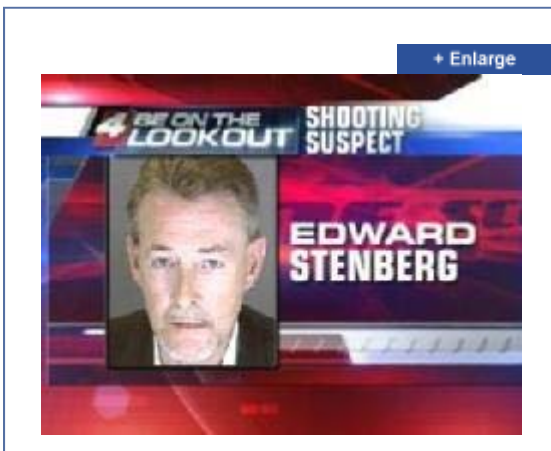
"We found the vehicle and now we are looking for him," Waterford Police Chief Dan McCraw said.

Stenberg has a history of domestic abuse, according to police. He was jailed in April 2006 after pleading no contest to assault with intent to do great bodily harm less than murder.

#### RELATED TO STORY



**Video: Laura Ann Stenberg's Son Speaks To Local 4**



Stenberg is described as white, 5 feet 10 inches tall and 175 pounds.

Anyone with information is asked to call the Waterford Township Police Department at 248-674-0351.

Stay with Local 4 News and ClickOnDetroit.com as more information becomes available.

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Press & Argus

September 12, 2007

## **Cops help needy kids shop**

The fifth annual Shop with a Cop program, which pairs underprivileged children in the county with a police officer to shop for Christmas gifts, is gearing up for the holiday season.

The program is run by the Livingston County Sheriff's Department with other police departments in conjunction with the Department of Human Services and Big Brothers Big Sisters of Livingston County, which identify children for the program.

It's a great event. Kids get to know the police officers at the same time they're buying gifts for themselves or family members. Typically, each child gets to spend about \$100, depending on how much money is raised.

The program helped 70 kids in 2005 and more than 100 last year. The goal is to exceed those numbers this year for the shopping trip that's set for Dec. 1 at Wal-Mart.

The program is looking for donations. If you're interested in helping, gift cards can be purchased at Wal-Mart during regular business hours and brought to the Sheriff's Department from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Mondays through Fridays.



The Detroit News

Wednesday, September 12, 2007



Dale G. Young / The Detroit News

Senate Fiscal Committee Chairman Gary Olson endured tough questioning from senators on Tuesday during budget talks.

## **GOP shows grim fix through cuts**

## **Senate Republicans outline a plan that avoids a projected 2008 deficit without new revenue.**

Mark Hornbeck / Detroit News Lansing Bureau

**LANSING** -- House Democrats promised to consider a tax hike in a rare Friday session, while Senate Republicans sketched a scorched-earth scenario

Tuesday to illustrate what would happen to state government if the entire \$1.75 billion state budget deficit is erased with cuts and no tax increases.

House Speaker Andy Dillon, D-Redford Township, said the House's budget plan probably will include an income tax increase and expansion of the sales tax to some services, along with spending cuts and government reforms.

Under the all-cuts plan presented to the Senate Appropriations Committee: Local governments would lose nearly \$400 million they use for police and fire protection, road repair, garbage pickup and other services. School districts would get no funding increase next year, saving \$290 million. Universities and community colleges wouldn't be reimbursed for the \$139 million the state took from them this year, forcing tuition even higher.

Programs to promote middle school math would be shut down, saving \$20 million. State Police funding of county road patrols would be scratched, for a savings of \$14 million.

A savings of \$111 million from prison system cuts would involve closing three or four prisons and a couple of prison camps, letting thousands of inmates out of lockups.

**An early retirement plan would downsize state government by 6,700 employees, saving another \$192 million. About one-third of those would be caseworkers and other Human Services department employees who handle adoption, foster care, family assistance and other services.**

Democrats called the cuts draconian.

"This proposal really, really hurts our citizens," said Sen. Deborah Cherry, D-Burton.

Republicans said they're not advocating such a plan at this point, and the Senate Appropriations Committee didn't vote on it Tuesday. But it may be the only option available, they said.

"If you don't like the fact we're looking at a lot of cuts, put up a tax proposal," Sen. John Pappageorge, R-Troy, said to Democrats. "If we don't get some kind of tax proposal, two-thirds (of the solution) is going to be cuts."

Senate Majority Leader Michael Bishop, R-Rochester, added: "We are in the 11th hour. We don't think government shutdown is an option. The House needs to participate."

The Republican-controlled Senate, the Democrat-dominated House and Democratic Gov. Jennifer Granholm have been grappling for seven months with the looming budget deficit in the fiscal year that begins in only 19 days. Republicans insist the Democratic House approve the tax increase it has

been advocating. Democrats retort it doesn't make sense to pass a tax hike without getting agreement from Senate Republicans.

The House did not present a budget plan Tuesday and also did not take a vote on a tax increase. There could be a vote as soon as today on a tax hike plan, possibly a boost in the state income tax from 3.9 percent to at least 4.4 percent and an extension of the 6 percent sales tax to some services.

But Speaker Dillon said it's more likely the House will try to pass a tax hike during a scheduled Friday session.

"Sen. Bishop has told us he won't negotiate revenue," Dillon said. "We have to come up with a plan on our own, so that's what we're going to do."

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# **GOP, Democrats' debate: Cuts or new taxes?**

Posted by [Peter Luke](#) September 12, 2007 06:30AM

LANSING -- Stark, last-minute choices facing Michigan lawmakers who have until Sept. 30 to pass a balanced budget and close a \$1.7 billion budget gap finally are being laid bare this week for the public to see.

Majority Republicans in the Senate Tuesday put on the table a spending freeze for K-12 schools, a 10-percent cut in university funding, a 13-percent reduction of the state's work force and the elimination of \$400 million in revenue sharing payments to municipalities.

Democrats who run the House, meanwhile, signaled they intend to push forward Friday with a billion dollar-plus revenue package that includes an income tax increase and the extension of sales tax to some consumer services.

As the days tick by without an agreement by Gov. Jennifer Granholm and lawmakers, Senate Fiscal Agency Director Gary Olson reminded grim-faced members of the Senate Appropriations Committee that they are confronting a massive, \$1.75 billion deficit.

Blowing past Oct. 1 without a balanced budget is not a realistic option, given the state has to make some \$37 million in bond payments that day. A default, Olson said, would "set Michigan back years, if not decades."

Lawmakers are being pressed not only by the calendar, but by a variety of interest groups.

Today, Michigan's professional sports teams were opposing the idea of tacking the state's 6-percent sales tax on entertainment tickets.

Grand Rapids-based sports talk show host Bill Simonson was to devote his three-hour afternoon broadcast on the Capitol lawn to what team publicists called "No Ticket Tax Day."

Last week, state spending advocates for the poor and local governments sought to balance the budget with a "bake sale" on the Capitol lawn; cookies were priced at \$75 million each.

Lawmakers are on similarly different pages.

Senate Majority Leader Michael Bishop, R-Rochester, has laid out a series of fiscal steps that include an \$874 million package of education spending freezes, payroll reductions and nearly \$300 million in unspecified cuts to every state department.

Granholm proposed and House Democrats approved a 2.5 percent increase in state aid for the K-12 school year that began on July 1. Bishop said he'd scrap that increase and said lawmakers had to "take a big hunk out of the government."

**Democrats argued that Bishop's early retirement proposal would, for example, create some 2,000 vacancies in a Department of Human Services responsible for foster care and adoption services, child protection and juvenile justice.**

"I don't believe the people of the state of Michigan would think this is an appropriate solution," said Sen. Deborah Cherry, D-Burton.

Republicans don't think tax hikes are a solution.

House GOP leader Craig DeRoche of Novi said there were no Republican votes for a House Democratic tax plan that would generate more than \$1.5 billion in revenue and could be voted on Friday. Democrats have a slim 58-52 margin in the chamber.

House Speaker Andy Dillon, D-Redford Township, said his caucus wants a tax hike big enough to fix a structural financial problem made worse by years of borrowing and accounting gimmicks. One element in the House plan could boost the personal income tax rate from 3.9 percent to 4.6 percent.

"I don't want to just squeak through this," Dillon said.

The House Wednesday did approve Senate-passed bills that allow local schools and governments to form health insurance pools for their employees.

Differences between the chambers still have to be ironed. The bills, designed in particular to reduce teacher health care costs, are considered key to any overall budget solution.

# News Release

**Contact: Colleen Steinman or Maureen Sorbet (517) 373-7394**

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## **Child Support distributes \$1 billion in 2007 to Michigan children**

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**Sept. 12, 2007**

The Department of Human Services' Office of Child Support today reported in the first three quarters of fiscal year 2007 the Michigan Title IV-D child support program distributed over \$1 billion. The total amount distributed was \$1,078,608,104, an increase of almost \$13 million above the same period in 2006. This included over \$320 million in past due support.

An additional \$27.4 million was distributed to families in other states with child support cases in the jurisdiction of a Michigan court.

"The child support program is a critical government program helping to keep children out of poverty," said Ismael Ahmed, director of the Department of Human Services. "The recognition of that critical role is never lost on child support professionals. Even though the number of workers went down in fiscal year 2006, the amount collected per worker increased by over \$24,000 to a total of \$573,356 collected per worker. In 2007 their distributed collections continue to increase."

In the first nine months of 2007, \$974 million was paid to families in Michigan; \$28 million was distributed to cover medical costs for children; and \$76 million was collected to reimburse the federal and state governments for public assistance provided to families.

"Parents who pay child support are investing in their child's future," said Marilyn Stephen, director of the Office of Child Support. "The state helps invest in our future by ensuring child support is paid. The federal government's funding reduction of over \$50 million per year for the Michigan child support program beginning in October 2007 is short sighted. The governor's budget recognizes the critical importance of funding this program to Michigan's children."

Michigan consistently ranks in the top ten states for total collections distributed, total cases with collections and total amount of past due support distributed.

For more information go to <http://www.michigan.gov/childsupport>

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